

QUALITY OF SERVICE REVIEW: WHAT IS IT?

**By Jean Watkins, Psy.D., LACDMH Senior Community MH Psychologist,
Child Welfare Division**

“John’s (a pseudo name) family came to the attention of DCFS after sheriffs found methamphetamines in the family’s home. Mother’s boyfriend, stepfather and mother were arrested. John, a 13 year-old and his siblings were made to stand outside of the home for a long time while witnessing their parents’ arrests. Parents received federal charges for sales and trafficking of narcotics and sent to prison. Allegations for general neglect by both and sexual perpetration by stepfather were eventually substantiated.

“John has experienced three placements since his mother and stepfather were arrested. As a result of these traumatic losses he has a severely depressed mood. Mental health is addressing this by providing both in-home therapy and medications.

“Despite the bad news, there turns out to be much good news. First, John’s extended family is very supportive and very loving and they are determined to keep John in their lives. He has a kind and expert caregiver and his mother strongly desires to be reunited with him and all of her children. John is close to and enjoys weekly visits with his siblings and cousins. He is athletic and especially likes basketball.”

What you have just read is an excerpt from a Quality Service Review (QSR) case story. What is the QSR? The QSR is a tool that Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) have been using over the past two years to measure how families, children and youth in the child welfare system are doing; what is working for them and what is not working for them. It also examines the systems involved that affect our practices, and how this ultimately affects families.

Similar to “John,” many children and youth involved with DCFS experience trauma not only from the physical and emotional abuse they have endured but also as they are removed from their homes. QSR reviews are able to illuminate the successful involvement some of these children and families have with mental health treatment providers as well as when there is a need for a referral or increased resources.

QSR provides a unique opportunity for our staff to spend two days with a DCFS partner, interviewing all the important persons in the child/youth’s life, including the child, family and social worker. On the second day, the cases are discussed confidentially in ten-minute oral presentations at the Grand Rounds to DCFS and LACDMH managers and staff. The purpose of these case stories is to highlight how the family was introduced to DCFS, the strengths and challenges to the family and to the practice.

With their manager's approval, any LACDMH staff is invited to attend a two-hour Grand Rounds presentation to learn more about what is involved. Since QSR reviews cover the entire County, there are two Grand Rounds scheduled almost every five week.

If you have any questions or would be interested in more information, please contact:

Jean Watkins, Psy.D, jwatkins@dmh.lacounty.gov